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POLAND: Talks About Dialogue

Archbishop Glemp calls for Church-Solidarity-government talks, while Deputy Premier Rakowski hints that martial law will last a very time. Meanwhile, market supplies in Warsaw appear to have stabilized, and the regime is defending the need for price increases.

Glemp is publicly voicing the need for a dialogue among the Church, Solidarity, and the martial law authorities. In his sermon on Sunday, he offered the Church as a mediator to heal "the broken nation." The joint Church-government commission held a meeting yesterday.

According to a Western visitor who met with him recently, Glemp is anxious to get serious negotiations under way, fearing that a growing radicalization of the people and the rise of hardliners in the regime could lead to violence. He also reportedly was critical of Solidarity leader Walesa's intransigence as an impediment to getting talks going.

The government, meanwhile, continues to claim it, too, desires dialogue. Stanislaw Ciosek, the Minister for Trade Union Affairs and frequently in contact with Solidarity in the past, told a group of workers on Sunday that he had held talks "of a general nature" with Walesa and other union leaders and hoped to continue some kind of dialogue.

Comment: Prospects for a dialogue remain poor. The regime is unwilling to relax martial law restrictions quickly enough to suit the Church or to allow Solidarity a meaningful role in the talks. Despite the meeting of the joint Church-government commission, the Church will continue to criticize Premier Jaruzelski's policies. It hopes such criticism will deflect the suggestion that it is playing the regime's game by engaging in any talks.

Rakowski Interview

In a wide-ranging interview with the West German magazine *Stern*, Deputy Premier Rakowski said that chaos would return to Poland "within a month" if martial law were lifted. He also said that Poland will need at least five years to straighten out its economy and that economic conditions are the key to "all" renewal and reform.

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Rakowski added that the government is creating social commissions to fill trade union functions during martial law and claimed that Walesa, without his advisers, is a figurehead lacking insight and out of touch with reality.

Comment: Rakowski's comments are another indication that martial law will not soon be lifted. They also reflect the government's line that political discipline is necessary for economic improvement and a return to the renewal process.

The regime clearly has begun to experiment with alternatives to Solidarity that would provide a non-political forum for dealing with worker problems. As part of this process, the authorities will continue to discount Walesa, either dismissing him as unimportant in Poland's future or claiming that he agrees with government views on the direction of the trade union movement.

Price Increases

Polish radio yesterday reported an open letter from the council of the committee that is considering price increases. While defending the need for food, fuel, and power price hikes, the letter notes that the proposed increases have provoked "justified disquiet."

Comment: The government feels the increases are necessary but is sensitive to the possibility that they will provoke further public hostility and unrest.

Food Supplies

Recent surveys of the market situation in Warsaw continue to show severe meat shortages, but dairy and grain products are in good supply. Stocks of most food items in Lublin and Rzeszow--two smaller provincial capitals--are generally worse.

Comment: Supply conditions seem to have stabilized recently in the Warsaw area. The average consumer does not appear to be starving but has less variety and smaller quantities than he had a year ago. Any distress slaughtering of chickens because of cutbacks in US corn shipments will, over the longer term, aggravate the situation and might lead to an increased protein deficiency in the population.

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